CRANBERRY CREEK
Gateway Park Project

Community Engagement Plan

Cranberry Creek Gateway Park Project
Community Engagement Plan

Prepared for: Brownfields Federal Partnership Mine-Scarred Lands Initiative

Prepared by: SRA International
(Contract No. 68-W-01-048)
3434 Washington Boulevard
Arlington, VA 22201

Cranberry Creek Gateway Park Project Community Engagement Plan

TABLE OF CONTENTS
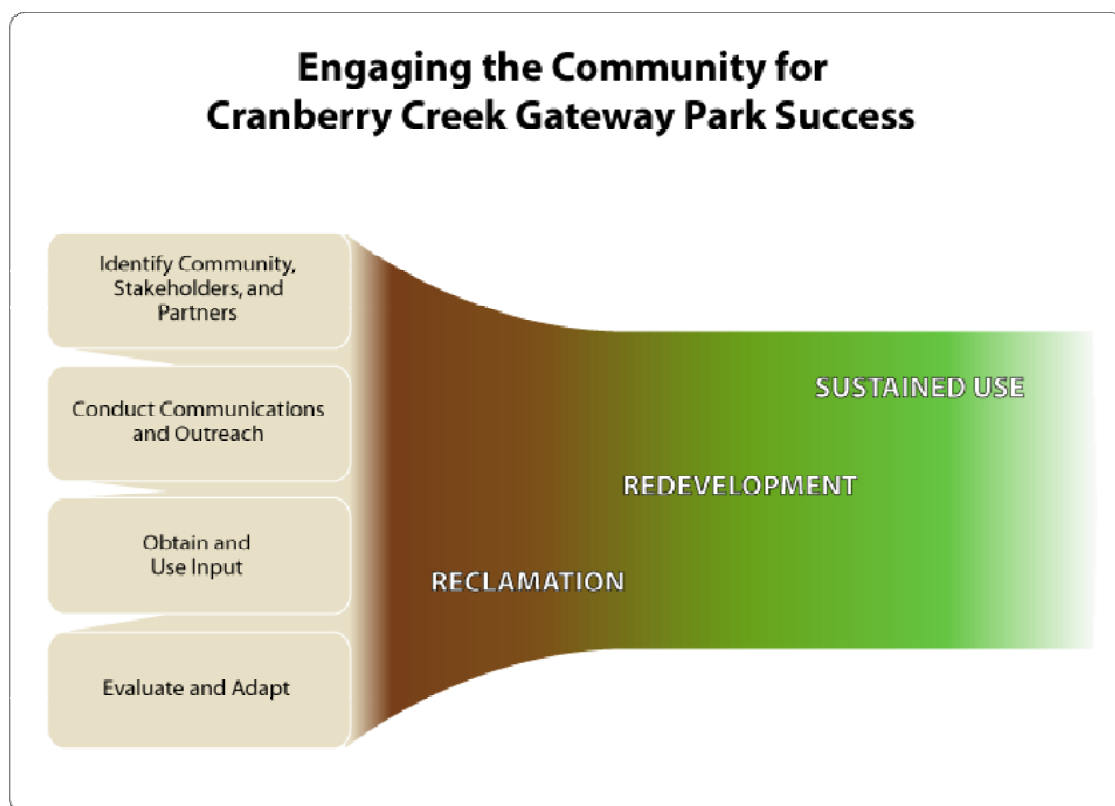
Cranberry Creek Gateway Park Project Community Engagement Plan

Cranberry Creek Gateway Park Project

The Cranberry Creek Gateway Park project will be an asset to the Greater Hazleton Region (the region) by improving the entrance to the region and providing additional community and economic resources to the area. The cleanup and redevelopment of the property will help the region attract additional interest in, and resources to, the community and create an aesthetically pleasing and productive community gateway. Additionally, the project will help change the way people in the region feel about themselves and their community by looking toward the future and creating new development.

The scale of this project is unlike any other undertaken by members of the Cranberry Creek Gateway Park committee in that it consists of several phases, each involving its own set of interested parties and stakeholders. For example, the cleanup component of the project alone will require special consideration of stakeholder needs and concerns, in addition to the full range of economic, environmental, and other social issues associated with the cleanup. Due to the scale of the project and the fact that it involves multiple phases, each building on the previous, it is important that the Cranberry Creek Gateway Committee (the committee) seek community engagement and participation in the process to ensure success.

By developing and implementing a community engagement plan, the committee will ensure that regional residents are educated and excited about the project. This will help facilitate and accelerate the cleanup and redevelopment process. By asking the community to participate in the project early in the planning process, the committee will ensure that the community embraces the project from the first to last phase and that all parties involved will achieve mutually satisfying outcomes.

This plan presents a framework for the committee to think about and plan for community engagement. It discusses the Cranberry Creek Gateway Park project in terms of four components:

- The public (i.e., the community, stakeholders, and partners)
- Communication and outreach
- Input and participation
- Evaluation and adaptation

By discussing community engagement in terms of these components, the committee will be able to better determine appropriate timing and strategies for engaging other parties over the course of the project.

Introduction: Goals and Principles of Community Engagement

Community engagement is a process that connects community leaders with citizens regarding a project or issue of common interest or concern. The process consists of community leaders providing information to, and getting input from, the community on project ideas and activities. The community input then informs community leaders about the activities and messages that will help accomplish project goals.

A community engagement plan outlines a series of activities related to a project that an organization performs in order to identify, provide information to, and get feedback from interested parties. The planning phase of the Cranberry Creek Gateway Park project presents an ideal opportunity for the committee to engage the community in order to obtain input on and generate support for the project. Inclusive engagement means ensuring that everyone who has an interest in or is potentially affected by the project is made aware of it and has an opportunity to participate in its development. The community needs to be aware of the project and comfortable with both the cleanup process and the end use, since it will be most affected by its development and is the ultimate beneficiary of the project.

Outcomes of Community Engagement
Meaningful community engagement usually results in new ideas being brought to a project, minimization of conflict and delays, and the establishment of relationships in the local community that can benefit current and future projects. It can limit the number of surprises that occur during a project because all parties share information openly and consistently. Furthermore, through the community engagement process the committee will have the opportunity to test its priorities in the marketplace, thus optimizing the use of its resources.

Tips for Community Engagement:

- Provide clear and factual information about the project on a predictable and consistent basis.
- Define the level of engagement expected from the community, stakeholders, and partners.
- Be open and transparent in making decisions.
- Make use of existing communication mechanisms in addition to developing new ones.
- Be flexible and make changes in the process and project as necessary.

Challenges of Community Engagement

While community engagement yields positive results, it also poses challenges to those initiating the process. These challenges include:

- "Going slow to go fast." This means that community engagement can require significant time at the outset of the project. However, adequate planning time spent at the beginning of the process can pay off in dividends by developing support for the project and reducing the likelihood of delays in later stages.
- Identifying the affected community, project stakeholders, and potential partners needed to support the project, either through their political support or through providing resources and expertise. Some stakeholders and partners may be involved for the duration of the project while others may only be involved for specific project phases.
- Developing key messages about the project and communication vehicles for sharing project information and key messages.
- Determining the issues on which to obtain community input and how that input will be considered and used.
- Being flexible and making changes to the community engagement process as needed.

Community engagement is not a one-size-fits-all endeavor. Rather, it involves working with the appropriate parties to determine how they want to be involved. The table below shows the spectrum of community engagement, including the goals associated with each level and the implicit promise to the public associated with each level of engagement.

Spectrum of Community Engagement*

Level of Engagement	Goal of Engagement	Sponsor's Promise to the Public
Inform	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problems, alternatives, and solutions.	We will keep you informed.
Consult	To obtain public feedback on analyses, alternatives, and decisions.	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.
Involve	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that their issues and concerns are consistently understood and considered.	We will work with you to ensure that your concerns and issues are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision.
Collaborate	To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision, including development of alternatives and identification of the preferred solution.	We will look to you for direct advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decision to the maximum extent possible.
Empower	To place final decision making in the hands of the public.	We will implement what you decide.

*Adapted from the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2)

Set guidelines on input and participation from the community. Before seeking input, the committee should identify the aspects of the project on which it is seeking input and those aspects that are not open for comment or discussion. The community will understand that the committee has made great progress on this project and that there will be components that are not negotiable, while on others the committee is open to suggestions and improvements.

Key Messages

As the committee begins to think about community engagement, it should develop key messages to communicate to the community. Key messages:

- Help project participants (e.g., committee members, partners) to use a consistent message when discussing the overall project or any of its phases;
- Eliminate the potential for community confusion or misunderstanding about the project, its objectives, and the desired outcomes, as well as for reinforcing the project specifics to the community; and
- Help generate interest in the project – they are instrumental to informing the community, engaging stakeholders, and attracting partners.

By developing key messages that can be used as talking points for all committee members during presentations, meetings, and communications materials, the committee ensures that the project message is consistent.

> **Develop key messages**. The community will receive consistent and informative messages by ensuring that all committee members and partners are communicating the same message. Messages should be short, direct, and target specific themes or phases of the project. Consider developing a key message for: 1) the entire project, 2) public health concerns/reclamation, 3) land use plans/redevelopment, 4) differentiating between the mayor's project, and 5) others as needed to address questions already received about the project.

Key messages should be developed by considering the important components and points that the committee would like to convey to the public. For instance, when creating sub-messages, consider the topic of the message, what question the topic specific message may address, and what components of the project are the most important to highlight in addressing these questions. The committee should start by brainstorming phrases or words that could be included in the message and begin to form a message from those thoughts.

> **Brainstorming Key Messages:**
> Gateway
> Centerpiece
> Reclamation and Transformation
> Environmental Improvement Project
> Investment
> Recreation, Entertainment, Cultural Reuse
> Quality of Life
> Community Improvement

Example: Cranberry Creek Sample Project Key Message
The Cranberry Creek Gateway Park project is a community-based effort to enhance the Greater Hazleton area through recreation, economic, and entertainment opportunities.

The Cranberry Creek Gateway Park project is a community-based effort to provide the amenities to improve the recreational, economic, and entertainment opportunities for the Greater Hazleton area and visitors.

Example: Sample Public Health Concerns topic specific message
The Cranberry Creek Gateway Park committee and regulatory partners will ensure that the project area is protective of human health and the environment and will support productive reuse.

Identifying and reaching out to the community, stakeholders, and partners will help the committee obtain the additional support, resources, and skills to advance the project. The development of key messages and outreach materials will help the committee educate and inform the community about the project, opening up channels of communications. And by asking for and using community input, the committee will be able to address their priorities.

It is important to keep in mind that community engagement is not a linear process. Rather, as the project evolves and milestones are reached, the community engagement process will also evolve. The committee will need to reevaluate the messages, outreach materials, and partners to ensure that the goals of the committee and the community are being met.

Step 1: Identifying the Community, Stakeholders, and Partners

The committee is more likely to achieve its goals in a timely and cost-effective manner if it consults and collaborates with the Greater Hazelton community, its interested stakeholders, and organizational partners. For the purpose of this community engagement plan, we define these terms in the following way:

- **Community** – The community typically involves the geographic and political area most affected by the project. Because the Cranberry Creek Gateway Park project involves numerous political jurisdictions, the committee must consider how best to define community.
- **Stakeholders** – Within the community are different groups that have a particular interest in the overall project or specific phases. These may include neighbors, home owners associations, potential users, vendors, or other interest or advocacy groups. Stakeholders are important because they can lend political support, and the support of their members, to the project. Conversely, they can also block or delay implementation of the project.
- **Partners** – Groups or organizations that are willing to lend their resources, credibility, skills, knowledge, and leadership to the committee take on the role of partners. Partners take some of the project burdens off the committee.

While these terms are differentiated throughout this document, many individuals or groups may move between categories. For example, the distinction between stakeholder and partner is not always clear. Groups may start off as stakeholders but evolve into partners, and vice versa, depending on the project stage. Nevertheless, the community, stakeholders, and partners likely have very different information needs and desired levels of involvement in the project. It is important to keep all three categories of groups informed about the project in order to gain their support and encourage their participation in ways that benefit the committee and the project.

Remember: As the project moves forward, additional parties will be identified and come forward. At these points, the committee will have to determine how best to engage them.

Generally speaking, partners will be more engaged than stakeholders, who in turn, are more engaged than the community. Moreover, the involvement of the community, stakeholders, and partners is likely to change over time as the project moves through its different phases. The working assumption behind this plan is that, in general, the committee will **consult** with the community, **involve** stakeholders, and **collaborate** with partners. However, the committee should make an informed choice about the appropriate level of engagement for specific parties. When identifying stakeholders and partners, the committee should consider whether those identified need to be included in the committee structure. Partnering does not necessarily mean that these groups need to have an active role in the committee, just that these groups should be invited to the table.

This plan is going to address the project in three phases: reclamation, redevelopment, and sustained use. Viewing the project through different phases will help the committee start to think of stakeholders and appropriate partners relevant to each phase of the project. While it is useful to think about the project in terms of these phases, it is important to note that there will be considerable overlap between the end of one phase and the beginning of the next. For instance,

the plan for the site will influence the manner in which the property is reclaimed. Therefore, do not wait until reclamation is complete before starting to identify redevelopment stakeholders and partners.

Phase I: Reclamation
Reclamation of mine-scarred lands is a component of development with which the committee has limited experience. As a result, it may have to devote more time to identifying stakeholders with interests in reclamation, including those who are supportive of reclamation and those who oppose it. In identifying reclamation stakeholders (or stakeholders associated with any phase of the project, for that matter), the committee should strive to understand the position and interest of each stakeholder and see if it can find ways to accommodate the stakeholder's interest. The *position* is the stance that one takes on a particular issue. The *interest* is the underlying concern behind the position. For example, with reference to the issue of reclamation:

Position: "We are opposed to reclamation of Cranberry Creek."
Interest: "We are worried that the reclamation process will cause disruption to our daily lives."

Because of the scope and size of this project, the committee will need to define the community that this plan affects. When defining the community, keep in mind the activities associated with community engagement, the level of effort on behalf of the committee, and the level of community engagement sought. The following table lists potential community members:

Community

Community	Interest
City of Hazleton	Largest population most affected by the site; provide resources to support the end use
Hazle Township (inclusive of Villages of Cranberry, Harwood, Hollers Hill, Oneita, Shepton, Humboldt, Eagle Rock	Municipality in which the site is located; many residents will drive past site or are a direct neighbor to the site
West Hazleton	Municipality on border of site
Luzerne County	County which holds main three municipalities
Carbon County	Neighboring county
Schuylkill County	Neighboring county
Humboldt Industrial Park	Site neighbor with daily workforce population of more than 5,000 people
Banks Township	Municipality in Carbon County associated with the Greater Hazleton area
Beaver Meadows Borough	Municipality in Carbon County associated with the Greater Hazleton area
Black Creek Township	Municipality in Luzerne County associated with the Greater Hazleton area
Butler Township	Municipality in Luzerne County associated with the Greater Hazleton area

Conyngham Borough	Municipality in Luzerne County associated with the Greater Hazleton area
East Union Township	Municipality in Schuylkill County associated with the Greater Hazleton area
Foster Township	Municipality in Luzerne County associated with the Greater Hazleton area
Freeland Borough	Municipality in Luzerne County associated with the Greater Hazleton area
Jeddo Borough	Municipality in Luzerne County associated with the Greater Hazleton area
Kline Township	Municipality in Schuylkill County associated with the Greater Hazleton area
McAdoo Borough	Municipality in Schuylkill County associated with the Greater Hazleton area
North Union Township	Municipality in Schuylkill County associated with the Greater Hazleton area
Sugarloaf Township	Municipality in Luzerne County associated with the Greater Hazleton area
West Hazleton Borough	Municipality in Luzerne County associated with the Greater Hazleton area

The following table lists some stakeholders and their interests with respect to reclamation.

Potential Stakeholders

Stakeholder	**Support of Resource**
State Representative Todd Eachus	Political support for reclamation activities and funding; provide assistance during communications and outreach
State Senator Raphael Musto	Political support for reclamation activities and funding; provide assistance during communications and outreach
U.S. Congressman Paul Kanjorski	Political support for reclamation activities and funding; provide assistance during communications and outreach
Chesapeake Bay Watershed	Regional organization interested in abatement of acid mine drainage to watershed that could provide resources to support the project
PP&L	Utilities company which will provide infrastructure support to the site
Pagnotti Enterprises	Site neighbor and former owner. May have resources to contribute for communications and outreach
Friends of the Nescopeck	Provide support with outreach and community forums related to reclamation activities, positive effects on the region
First Federal Foundation	Financial partner for project stakeholders and partners
American Softball Association	Provide users, amenities, and financial support for the project

Land owners in closest proximity to site	Site end use may affect traffic, noise levels, etc.
Funding entities (public/private)	Provide capitol for the project
Eastern Middle Anthracite Region Recovery (EMARR)	
Cooperation of Norfolk Southern	Owner of rail-line that runs through the property
Cooperation of Hazleton City Authority	

The committee should also identify partners that have experience with reclamation issues. Targeting partners that have experience in this field will help the committee obtain resources not currently available. The following table identifies potential partners.

Potential Partners

Partner	**Resources for the Committee**
Hazle Township	Provide permits, logistical support, and emergency response to the site
PA Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Bureau of Abandoned Mines Reclamation (BAMR)	Provide oversight and support for reclamation activities
Eastern Pennsylvania Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation (EPCAMR)	Provide expertise for the education and outreach associated with the reclamation of mine-scarred lands Provide support with communications materials, land use planning, and public health inquiries
Pennsylvania Environmental Council (PEC)	Provide assistance with creating and distributing outreach materials Provide avenues for funding to reach the committee through a regional, educational nonprofit organization Provide additional resources based on past experience supporting other regional projects
Mine-Scarred Lands Initiative	Provide technical, financial, and project assistance
Penn State Hazleton	Provide skills, resources, and funding opportunities through educational programs and professors
Tri-Area Recreation	Provide users, amenities, and financial support for the project
CAN DO Community Foundation	Provide grant writing and overall project support

Chamber of Commerce	Provide committee leadership, opportunities to conduct communications and outreach, and outlets to chamber partners.
CAN DO	Provide leadership, technical support, and logistical support in overall project.
Keystone Job Corps	Provide resources to the project (employees, volunteers, outreach)
Luzerne County Community College	Provide resources for education and outreach Offer leaders and experts on all themes for the project
State PA Office of Budget	
Luzerne County Convention Center	
Civic Partnership	
Council of Governments	

The committee should understand that partnering can take many forms and that the committee will need to work with specific partners to determine their level and extent of engagement. It is also important to remember that while the committee will be looking for new community partners and ideas as part of the community engagement process, it should also be committed to offering its support and ideas to other organizations.

Phase II: Redevelopment

Certain stakeholders and partners may be able to lend their support or resources to the project through redevelopment. It is effective to reevaluate current stakeholders and partners at the beginning of each phase to ensure that they remain engaged and the committee remains inclusive. Additional stakeholders and partners will be identified as the phases of the project progress and may approach the committee for inclusion based on the results from marketing the project.

Phase III: Sustained Use

The final phase of the project will build upon the previous two phases and focus on sustained use. Many partners already involved in the project up to this point will most likely continue to stay engaged for this final phase, but additional partners and groups may need to be identified. It is likely that the community will become more interested as the project moves toward sustained use and expand to include a larger population of the region. While it is never too early to think about stakeholders and partners for the sustained use phase, they will be identified as the project unfolds.

Next Steps:
Once the committee has identified the community, stakeholders, and potential partners, it will need to develop strategies and mechanisms to communicate project information and the committee's message (discussed in Step 2) and obtain their input (discussed in Step 3). Communication and participation strategies flow from the identification of the community, stakeholders, and partners, and the assessment of their interests.

Contacting Partners. When reaching out to partners, remember to use your key messages to help describe the project and the outcomes. Explain why this partner is important to the project, the role they can play, and how they can benefit from the partnership. Remember that you are asking someone to help you, so you will have to ensure that they receive a benefit as well. Perhaps the partner will receive greater exposure if they are associated with the project or maybe the committee will offer unique support to a project of the partners or to the partner organization.

Step 2: Communications and Outreach

The communications and outreach component of community engagement conveys the committee's messages to the identified community, stakeholders, and partners. By educating the community about the project, the committee will be able to anticipate and relieve fears and frustrations because the information will be available and will address the many facets of the project that may be causing tension within the community. As with other aspects of community engagement, the committee's communications and outreach strategies must evolve and adapt to the project phases.

Communications Vehicles
The identification and use of marketing and communication vehicles will allow the committee to promote the project and educate the community through multiple venues. It is important to understand the audience that each type of marketing vehicle reaches and its general content. By creating its own communications vehicles and availing itself of its partners' vehicles and the mass media, the committee will be able to reach a broader audience with its project information.

The committee must constantly be aware of opportunities to promote the project. These opportunities should include using already established communication vehicles (e.g. partners' newsletters, newspapers, etc.), and should capitalize on project milestones. Project accomplishments provide an opportunity to promote the project by announcing progress and should be used to engage the community throughout the project.

Additionally, the committee should develop communications materials pertaining to each phase of the project. Just as key messages differ depending on the phase of the project, the amount of outreach and the communications materials will vary.

Self-Generated (committee)
Communications drafted by the committee and its members will address key project milestones as well as speak to any negative press that may arise during the life of the project. The communications materials can be educational or informational and should address all phases of the project. The committee can work to keep the community engaged in the project by tailoring communications materials to the questions raised by the community.

Communications materials should be consistent in their frequency so that the community can expect regular updates about the project.

> Communications Materials
> *Newsletter*: The committee should consider producing a newsletter that is distributed on a regularly scheduled basis (e.g. semi-annual, quarterly). This will allow the community to anticipate updates from the committee. The newsletter can address questions or concerns raised since the previous issue, speak to milestone accomplishments, or acknowledge new grants, partners, or activities. It can also promote the recent work of any partner organizations to demonstrate the goodwill that exists between the committee and the organizations that are offering support to the project.

Fact Sheets: Fact sheets should be developed to discuss and promote phases of the project. By creating materials that address specific issues, such as public health associated with the reclamation of the property, the committee can easily address any concerns or questions that are raised in meetings or informal communications with local stakeholders. Fact sheets can be used to address issues and concerns and also help promote specific redevelopment stages (e.g. residential houses, commercial space, etc.).

Web site: A Web site is an effective way to provide background information about the project to a wide audience. By regularly posting information about the project on a Web site, the committee, the partners, and the community will have one source to check when searching for information about the Cranberry Creek Gateway Park project. Key messages should be included on the homepage that describe the goals and objectives of the committee. All public information should be made available to the community through this Web site in order to demonstrate that the committee is transparent about the project and related activities.

Video: The video on the Cranberry Creek Gateway Park project designed by the committee in September 2005 is an effective tool for marketing the project to outside organizations. This video should be shared with the local community to promote the project and the efforts of the committee. The video discusses the components of the project and would provide the local community with valuable insight on the project. The video can be offered at public meetings, the library, or partners' meetings.

Partners/Groups
Relying on communications vehicles that already exist in partner organizations is a way for the committee to gain project exposure with minimal expense and effort. The committee will need to recognize the value of using the pre-existing communication materials of its partners, and also allow partners to promote their work in committee materials. By opening this two-way process, the committee will sustain the goodwill among partners and increase exposure to diverse audiences.

Partner	Contact	Publications	Frequency of Communications	Opportunities
EPCAMR	Robert Hughes (570) 674-7993	Web site	Updated regularly; inquire about newsletter	Promote reclamation and reuse
Northeastern Pennsylvania Alliance (NEPA)	Cameron Moore (570) 655-5581	E-Newsletter Calendar	Bi-weekly Updated regularly	Promote land use and economic development
Chamber of Commerce	Donna Palermo (570) 455-1508	Web site Newsletter Events		Promote project messages and goals

Mass Media

The committee has had great success with articles in the local papers; by continuing to make strategic use of local and regional media, the committee will reach more audiences with its key messages about the project. Messages that address specific project phases should be distributed to make sure the community is informed. Specifically, by reaching out to federal partners and sharing photos or approved messages on progress, the committee and project may receive recognition on a regional or national level. Many state and federal partners promote the projects they are supporting by circulating newsletters with success stories or posting photos on Web sites. The committee should continue to reach out to state and federal partners and keep them updated on the project and gain additional exposure through their communications.

Partner	Resource	Message
Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 3	Land Revitalization Newsletter	Reclamation, Partners, and Land Reuse
PA DEP BAMR	Publications	Reclamation and Partners
PA DCED	Web site Publications	Financial Investment, Economic Development, and Land Use
WYLN	½ hour community shows	All components of project

Outreach Materials

Outreach materials will help spread the message across target audiences (e.g. community, stakeholders, or partners). Materials should be updated and revised based on the phase of the project. It is important that outreach materials make clear that this project will consist of several phases and the project will take time to be completed. Being clear at the outset about the complexity and duration of the project will help establish realistic community expectations about the project and pace of progress.

Keep in mind that information also should be conveyed during "down times." Progress will be quite evident during some project phases (e.g., reclamation), but less so in others. The committee should strive to continue the flow of information during these down times by sharing information on what it is doing behind the scenes, such at work related to land use and investment. This will help maintain and sustain community support when progress is not as easily perceived or measured.

Creating **Public Information Repositories** is an effective and inexpensive way for the committee to allow public access to all project documents. Establishing and marketing a location where all project-related information is housed will allow community members to keep up with the project information at their convenience. The committee can solicit the assistance of a local community group to update and maintaining the repository in order to both lift the burden from the committee and engage the community group. Information repositories may be created at the following locations: library, schools, chamber of commerce, or information kiosks.

The committee should conduct outreach while keeping in mind appropriate venues, partners, products, and events. Educating the community about the phases, tasks, and accomplishments of the project will help keep the community interested, excited, and supportive of the project.

Consider the following venues, partners, and products when outlining outreach activities. These examples will help get you started in thinking about your outreach.

> **Events** that are appropriate venues for cross-promotions include: Open houses, monthly meetings, holiday celebrations, community festivals, sporting events, performances, recreationally sponsored outings, town meetings, school activities, etc.

Venues	Open houses Community meetings Schools Public Library Partner meetings
Partners	PA DEP EPA Region 3 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) EPCAMR Volunteer Fire Departments PA Community and Economic Development Local governments NEPA Alliance Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Local School Boards Local Universities
Products	Fact sheets (e.g. reclamation, cleanup technologies) Web site Newsletters "Lesson Plans" Brochure Post Cards (reminders, save the date, FYI)

Remember that some of these venues and products do not have to be self-generated. Partners should be able to help the committee educate the community about the phases of the project, helping to take the financial and resource burden from the committee. Many committee partners may even have a mission of education and outreach and will be the experts on how to share this information with the community.

> **Host an Open House!** When it is appropriate for the public to visit the Cranberry Creek Gateway Park property, consider hosting an open house to give the community a sense of the work ahead (e.g. reclaiming mine-scarred lands, redevelopment) and help establish ownership of, and enthusiasm for, the project. Site tours and informational materials will help the committee raise awareness within the community. Asking partners to set up booths or displays will establish goodwill and help the partners spread their messages.

Timeline for Communications and Outreach

Project Fact Sheet: The committee will consider producing a project history fact sheet early in 2006 for distribution to the community, stakeholders, and partners. The fact sheet can highlight the accomplishments of the projects to date and activities yet to come. Points to consider highlighting include: project survey, committee structure, purchase of land, organizational interest, feasibility study, identifying partners, BAMR reclamation, contact information, upcoming activities.

Town Hall Meeting (late February): To bolster goodwill and increase project understanding by those communities surrounding the site, the committee should consider hosting a town hall meeting with the Villages of Harwood, Hollers Hill, and Cranberry. This will help the community understand what activities will be taking place at the site and provide them an outlet to ask questions about the upcoming site activities.

Cranberry Creek Signage (early March): In order to meet administrative obligations associated with funding, the Cranberry Creek committee will be posting signs recognizing the site and the funding source. This will be a good opportunity to highlight the future site of the Cranberry Creek Gateway Park to the community.

Video (early 2006): The committee should continue to use the current video to conduct outreach to the general community. Committee members should offer to show the video during other community meetings. Also, keeping a copy in the public library will provide additional opportunities for the public to view the video.

Web site (late-summer): The committee should consider reserving an URL address in order to establish a Web site in the coming year. The Web site will be a tool to market the project, educate the community, field comments from the community, and receive feedback on the project. Posting old project materials in one place will also act as an information repository and ensure that the community has access to all project documents throughout the life of the project.

Partner Newsletters (as partners are identified): The committee should begin identifying and reaching out to potential partners in early 2006 in order to engage them in the project at the beginning stages. While project work may not pick up until mid-late 2006, engaging partners early in the process allows the committee time to inform the partners about project accomplishments and hear potential ideas and resources that could be provided by the partners. Once partnerships are established, the committee should determine how best to utilize existing partner newsletters to share information about the project.

Community Meetings (ongoing): The Cranberry Creek Gateway Park committee members are quite active throughout the community. Using already established venues and meetings, the committee members should inquire about making brief presentations on the project history and upcoming activities.

School "Lesson Plan" (early fall): The committee expressed interest in engaging the community at all levels. By developing a school lesson plan, potentially with a local university, the committee can design a classroom activity for children at all ages in order to teach them about the reclamation and redevelopment process taking place on the site.

Step 3: Obtaining and Using Input

A critical component of any community engagement plan is the establishment of feedback mechanisms. These mechanisms inform the community of how its input has helped to shape the project, thus demonstrating that community input is being heard and taken seriously. True community engagement is a two-way street, not just a one-way avenue for the committee to provide project information to other parties in the community. Rather, it involves providing opportunities for community, stakeholder, and partner input into the project design and implementation. Community engagement is a powerful process that can:

- Greatly expand the knowledge and practical insights into the issues being addressed;
- Expedite work by highlighting the issues that require the most attention, allowing for better prioritization of resources;
- Instill in all parties a sense of ownership and understanding of the issues associated with the project so they will accept decisions they might otherwise protest;
- Develop ongoing relationships to help implement the project; and
- Resolve specific issues before they become politicized.

Once the committee identifies its community, stakeholders, partners, and its methods of providing communication and outreach materials, it will need to determine what role the community (including the stakeholders and partners) will play in the development and implementation of the project. Again, the committee needs to think carefully about what it is asking of the community, recognizing that community approval is partially dependent on engagement, but that too much community involvement or poorly planned and executed involvement, may actually interfere with project progress.

> **Seeking Input**. As the project moves forward, remember to revisit the guidelines for input and participation. Remember to ask key questions about the project and the level of engagement as appropriate for each phase. For example, on what issues or aspects of reclamation, redevelopment, or end use will the committee seek public input? (With respect to reclamation issues, how will trucks and other heavy equipment access the site? Will there be a posted truck route that people can comment on? If there is any blasting associated with reclamation, during what hours will blasting be conducted? How will neighbors be informed of when blasting is to take place?)

The committee will need to determine the means or mechanisms it will use to obtain input. To date, the committee has done considerable work to conceptualize this project and get it off the ground. As a result, it probably has a rightful sense of ownership about the project. At the same time, it likely recognizes that it can gain additional community support and momentum by obtaining and using input to help shape the project. The most important point to remember with respect to obtaining and using community input is to set expectations. If the committee is clear about what role it wants the community to play and how the information will be used, then it is up to the community to determine if it's worthwhile to participate. If the committee is vague about when community input will be sought, how it will be used, or makes promises it cannot keep, then the community is likely to be angry if its suggestions are not used. This could result in a loss of community support for the project.

There are two ways to start mapping the reclamation and redevelopment issues on which the community will want to have a say. Knowing the community, stakeholders, and potential partners well will allow the committee to anticipate hot-button issues. Those issues can then be sorted out depending on whether they pertain to reclamation or redevelopment. The other approach is to begin listing issues (based on what has been said and the committee's sense of the community) that are likely to arise related to reclamation and redevelopment and identify which groups of stakeholders or partners will have an interest in those issues. For purposes of discussion, a list of potential issues follows.

Reclamation:
- Funding – Who is funding the reclamation work?
- Risks – Are there risks associated with reclamation? If so, how will these be managed?
- Disruption – What will be done to minimize disruption to the community during the reclamation process?
- Influence of reclamation on redevelopment and vice versa – What is the linkage between reclamation and the current redevelopment plan?
- Certification and assurance – Who will be responsible for certifying that the land is reclaimed properly and will support current redevelopment plans?

Redevelopment:
- Funding – How will the redevelopment work be funded?
- Use – For what will the reclaimed property be used?
- Input on concept – Is the committee open to getting input on the redevelopment concept?
- Input on aspects – Is the committee open to getting input on specific aspects of the redevelopment? If yes, which ones?

Sustained Use:
- Funding – How will maintenance and additional development be funded?
- Use – How will a new use be determined?
- Users – Who will have a say in the new businesses and opportunities

By identifying these issues early, the committee can begin to determine which stakeholders and partners will need to be engaged on which issues.

When the committee has identified the issues on which it wants input and the segments of the community that is interested in engaging on those issues, it will need to develop processes for obtaining their input. A list of active tools for obtaining input from the community, stakeholders, and partners follows.

Community

One assumption is that the general community will want to be consulted on the project. That means it will want to have the opportunity to provide feedback on any plans or alternatives regarding the project. A list of tools to consider follows.

- *Public Comments* – The committee should circulate draft plans for public comment. Plans can be placed in information repositories or posted on Web sites. Further, the committee should run advertisements in local media informing the community of the plans and the opportunity to provide comment.
- *Focus Groups* – The committee could randomly select members of the community in order to obtain input on planning decisions.
- *Surveys* – Like it has done before, the committee could conduct surveys to obtain input on various issues. These can be done through local media or online through Survey Monkey or other free or inexpensive Web sites. Response rate is greatly increased if the committee announces that a survey is coming and generates some interest in completing the survey.
- *Public Meetings* – These tried and true forums are good ways to inform the community about the project and get input on the project. Attendance is often increased if these meetings are coordinated with existing events or held at project milestones; it is also helpful if refreshments are offered.

Stakeholders

Another assumption is that most stakeholders will want to be involved in the project, meaning that they will want to work with the committee to make sure their issues and concerns are consistently understood and considered. A list of tools to consider follows.

- *Workshops* – These tend to be smaller, informal public meetings that may include presentations and exhibits but include interactive working groups. These are helpful for discussions on design criteria or analysis of alternatives. Further, they foster small group or one-to-one contact, build credibility, and maximize the feedback obtained from participants.
- *Interviews* – These are one-on-one meetings with stakeholders to gain information on community concerns and perspectives and for refining community engagement programs. These can also be used to evaluate potential citizen committee members.
- *Design Charettes* – These are intensive sessions where participants (re)design project features.

Partners

Partnerships are collaborative by design. When the committee invites partners into this project and avails itself of its partners' resources and expertise, it should anticipate that the partners will want to play a collaborative role in the project. That is, partners will likely want to have a role in each aspect of the decision, including the development of alternatives and identification of the preferred solution. A list of tools to consider follows.

- *Workshops and Design Charettes* – These are intensive sessions where participants (re)design project features.
- *Citizen Advisory Committees* – This is a group of representative partners and/or stakeholders assembled to provide input to the planning process. These committees can be time and labor intensive, but they provide opportunities for detailed analyses of project issues and for participants to gain an understanding of one another's perspectives, leading toward consensus.
- *Committee Membership* – Invite partners to become members of, or advisors to, the committee for specific project phases or issues.

These are some options for means to obtain input. Again, the committee's choice of options will depend on the level or extent of input it is seeking and the issue in question. These, in turn, should be based on the expectations it has set with the community.

If the community is willing to take the time and energy to participate in the overall redevelopment process, then the committee will need to build in feedback loops to inform the community of how the information received influenced the committee's decisions on the project. There are numerous ways that the committee can provide such feedback to the community, such as through press briefings and news releases, meetings, and through responsiveness summaries (i.e., documents that summarize the input, how it was used, and why). This demonstrates to the community that the committee takes its input seriously.

Step 4: Evaluation and Adaptation

A community engagement plan is a work in process. No plan can anticipate every twist and turn in a project, especially one as complex as the Cranberry Creek Gateway Park project. Rather, a community engagement plan is a living document that will require changes and updates as the project unfolds, unanticipated issues emerge, and new stakeholders and partners come forward. For these reasons, it is important to build in opportunities to obtain feedback and make adjustments to the community engagement plan and process.

> **Obtaining Feedback.**
> <u>Web site</u> – post a survey or questions that the community can access and fill out
> <u>Community Meetings</u> – use partners' scheduled meetings to ask for input
> <u>Comment Cards</u> – create a comment card that can be filled out and returned at events

Here are some basic evaluation questions to ask the community.

<u>Information</u>
- Are you receiving information on the project?
- Is the information you receive on the project informative?
- Does the timing of information updates work?
- Do you have any suggestions for improving the content?
- Do you find it easy to access or find information on the project?
- Should we be using other communication mechanisms to get information to you?

<u>Participation</u>
- Do you feel informed about opportunities to participate in the process?
- Do you feel like you are asked to participate at the right opportunities in the project?
- Are there barriers to your participation that we should know about (e.g., are the events held during the daytime while you're at work)?
- Is the committee clear about what issues it wants input on and how the input will be used?
- Is the committee clear about how the input received has been used?

<u>Partnering</u>
- Do you feel the committee has adequately used your expertise or resources as part of this project?
- Has the committee been willing to share its expertise and resources to help your organization's effort?
- Has your organization benefited from the partnership with the committee?

Appendix A

Community Engagement Outline of Activities
The following chart outlines activities discussed by the Cranberry Creek committee during the December committee meeting. The timeframe and activity lead will be determined by the committee.

Activity	Timeframe	Activity Lead
Develop Key Messages		
Engage Stakeholders and Partners		
Create Project Fact Sheet		
Host Town Hall Meeting with Villages of Harwood, Hollers Hill, and Cranberry		
Establish Information Repository		
Create Cranberry Creek Signage		
Distribute Video		
Establish Web site		
Utilize Partner Newsletters		
Host Community Meeting		
Sponsor a School "Lesson Plan"		